

School-to-Work

Missouri's Roadway to Success

Fall 1995
Volume I - Issue I

Survey Reveals Attitudes

Missouri's students need a strong foundation in the basics upon which they can build additional skills. This is one of the key findings of a public engagement project conducted by Attitude Research Company for the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education.

The project focused on the proposed academic performance standards being developed to meet the requirements of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The research company conducted 16 focus groups and surveyed 800 Missourians this spring to evaluate the responses to the proposed standards.

Rod Wright of Attitude Research, said members of each focus group used the same example to illustrate their concerns about public education -- an 18-year-old who can't make change without a computerized cash register. Thus, Wright says, when Missourians talk about basics, they mean more than just reading, writing and arithmetic, they are also talking about essential living skills like filling out a job application, balancing a checkbook, making change and understanding simple tax forms.

These responses are aligned with the concepts behind the school-to-work initiative. Of the 800 people surveyed, 99.3% said it was important that high school graduates be prepared for either advanced educational opportunities, job training or a career.

The majority of Missourians agree on the need for high school graduation standards, they also agree that graduates need to be prepared for work or further education. The standards are currently under additional revision so that when they are put in place they will meet the needs of all of Missouri's youth.

SCHOOL-BASED BUSINESS COMBINES EDUCATION AND WORK

Freshmen, seniors, dropouts and college-bound students were part of a group of young people from across Barton County who joined forces this summer in Lamar. In six weeks they experienced everything from teambuilding to manufacturing to marketing.

The Lamar Area Vocational Technical School was where it all happened. It was the site of a school-based business that manufactured fishing rod holders, trot line clips, fishing lures, steel storage sheds and even automotive starter solenoids. The business ran with 34 employees on 40-hour work weeks.

The young people rotated through work stations of welding, grinding, milling, turning, drilling, measuring (metric, fractions & decimals) and production meetings. The meetings focused on safety, teamwork, attendance, the "time is money" concept and workplace discipline.

The business sold its products to retailers like Bass Pro, Wal-Mart and Ace Electric of Columbus, Kansas as well as a local fishing lure shop.

The business was run through Private Industry Council funds for a contracted summer youth program that paid the students' wages. All profits were returned to the students as bonuses.

Co-directors of the project were Marvin Seela, Welding Instructor and Dana Robison, Machine Shop Instructor. They were on-site each day to assist students and troubleshoot.

The co-directors stressed that one of the most important skills the students learned as a result of their summer experience was how to work as a team. They experienced some assembly line friction and personnel problems; but they learned how to handle these problems as a team and accomplish their goals.

Karl Morey, Lamar Area Vocational Technical School contributed to this story.



Ricky Stevens, a member of Lamar's Team, studies the lathe in the manufacturing section of this summer's school-based business.

STUDENTS EXPLORE SUMMER INSTITUTE

"We have all taken another step toward our future career, and we thank you for that opportunity"

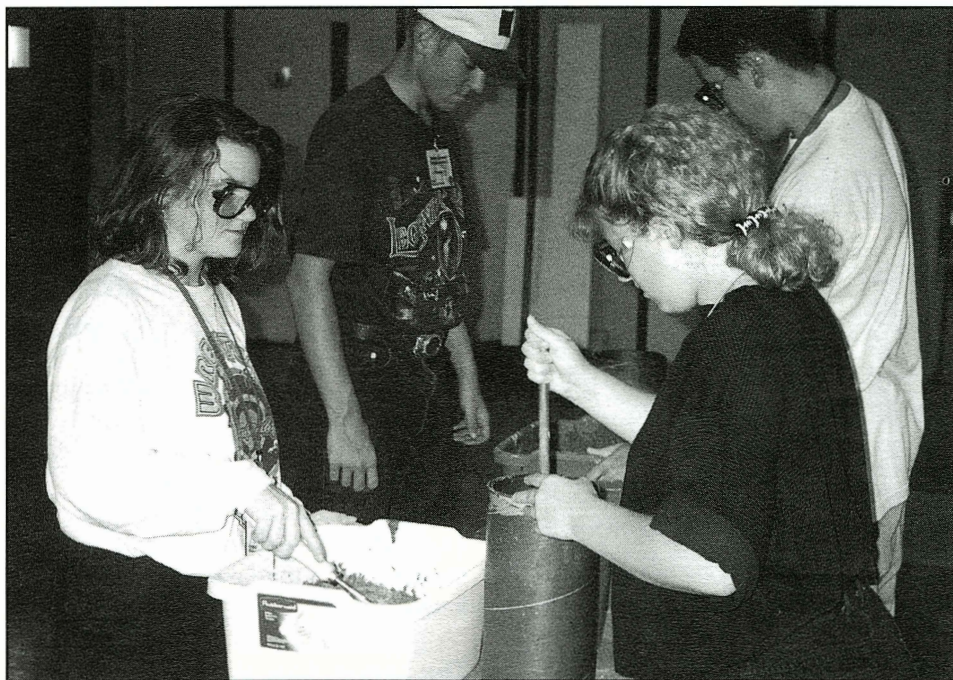
Matthew Hackett
Grain Valley High School

Matthew was reporting the impact that integrated classroom instruction, team building exercises and company tours had during the Summer Industrial Institute for Technology held at Central Missouri State University in July. Twenty-seven high school students explored industrial careers during the week-long institute sponsored by local industries & educational institutions.

In five days the students worked in laboratory settings in the areas of construction, electronics, graphics, drafting, aviation mechanics and manufacturing. They learned team building skills from industrial trainers and employees on the job, and they explored "all aspects of the industry" at the job sites of five local industries: Whiteman Air Force Base, Hawker Energy Products, Stahl Specialty Company, Harmon Industries and Swisher Airport.

The students designed planes, mixed and poured concrete, networked computers, programmed robotic arms, screen printed shirts, did computer drafting, cut composites of the wings of airplanes, and practiced team building throughout the week. Participating school districts were Raytown, Blue Springs, Fort Osage, Grain Valley, Warrensburg and Knob Noster. The young people were selected because of career interest in the area of industrial technology.

During all of these activities the students were asked to step out of their comfort zones and play to win. A Raytown student commented, "I was really out of my



Students Melissa Burgess and April Burgin of Knob Noster High School and Christopher Cox and Ryan Gibson of Raytown High School demonstrate math skills while mixing concrete as part of their construction class experience during the Industrial Institute for Technology. Satisfactory completion indicated proper conversion of numbers from metric to English.

comfort zone when the pilot asked me to take over the controls of the airplane."



Career exploration benefits were obvious when the young people could list over 200 jobs they learned about and made the following reports: "I have always liked chemistry, but I never thought about it in a manufacturing setting." Another said, "I never understood how many careers there were in manufacturing...there are planners and buyers and all kinds of engineers," and yet another commented "I used to think of technology as just computers and there is so much more!"

Students weren't the only beneficiaries of the institute. Dr. J.P. Mees, Provost at Central Missouri State University said, "An entire department has been energized. This has been a good experience for them."

Wanda Evans, Coordinator, reported, "In my 26 years of teaching, this is the one of the best things I've been able to offer students."

The Summer Institute grew out of the Harmon Industries/Education Partnership and several Harmon employees assisted with the team building activities. Brad Silvey, Director of Manufacturing, and Janine Connelly, Trainer, kicked off the Institute. Ron Breshears, Vice-President of Human Resources and Bill Bush, Engineering, helped throughout the week.

Neva Allen, Harmon Industries, contributed to this story.

REGIONAL CENTERS ASSIST SCHOOLS

Back in January of this year Missouri announced the establishment of nine professional development centers to assist public schools and their regions. The centers received grants under the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. These centers will be the site of professional development activities as they relate to school-to-work.

Each site is staffed with a director and charged with serving as a clearinghouse, addressing needs in the areas of implementation of school improvement initiatives and helping to facilitate the development of a seamless curriculum. They have videoconferencing capabilities and will offer high-quality in-service training and technical assistance.

"To be successful, the centers will have to be responsive to the real-world needs and problems of teachers and schools. This will help them improve their programs for preparing the teachers and school administrators of the future," said Dr. Robert E. Bartman, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the state. That makes them an excellent school-to-work resource.

Professional Development Centers

SEMO - Cape Girardeau
Wayne Pressley, 314-651-2479

UMC - Columbia/Fulton
Paul Pitchford, 314-882-8859

UMKC - Kansas City
Kathy Jensen, 816-235-1000

NMSU - Kirksville
David Bethel, 816-785-7429

NWMSU - Maryville
Joyce Flowers, 816-562-1502

UMR - Rolla
Thomas Deering, 314-341-4390

SMSU - Springfield
Karen Evans, 417-836-5124

UMSL - St. Louis
Craig Jones, 314-231-0130

CMSU - Warrensburg
Gene Vinson, 800-762-4146

School-to-Work Opportunities and the Fair Labor Standards Act -- A Guide to Work-Based Learning, Federal Child Labor Laws, and Minimum Wage Provisions has been developed by the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Office. The guide offers assistance with issues surrounding work-based learning, how working students fit under the Fair Labor Standards Act and some general information on state and local laws, waivers, terminology and resources.

If you'd like to receive a copy of the booklet, please contact the Missouri School-to-Work Office at (314) 526-1820 or (314) 751-4192.

Welcome to the first issue of the *School-to-Work Newsletter*. This newsletter is published quarterly by the Missouri School-to-Work Office.

Please direct articles and photographs to School-to-Work, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102. (314) 526-1820, Fax (314) 526-4261.



PILOTING THE SYSTEM

In 1994 three sites were selected under the Missouri School-to-Work Opportunities grant to serve as testing ground for a comprehensive system. The sites went to work on implementing School-to-Work in their communities. An account from each area follows.

State Fair Community College Sedalia

Collaborative efforts of the School-to-Work Partnership which include work with the Tech Prep Consortium and the A+ Schools Program have led to adoption of the Career Pathways by all Sedalia 200 schools. Counselors have been trained on the implementation of the pathways and parents and students have been introduced to the concept through meetings, the distribution of printed materials and a video. In addition, the secondary school has incorporated applied academic courses in math, communication, physics, biology and chemistry into their curriculum.

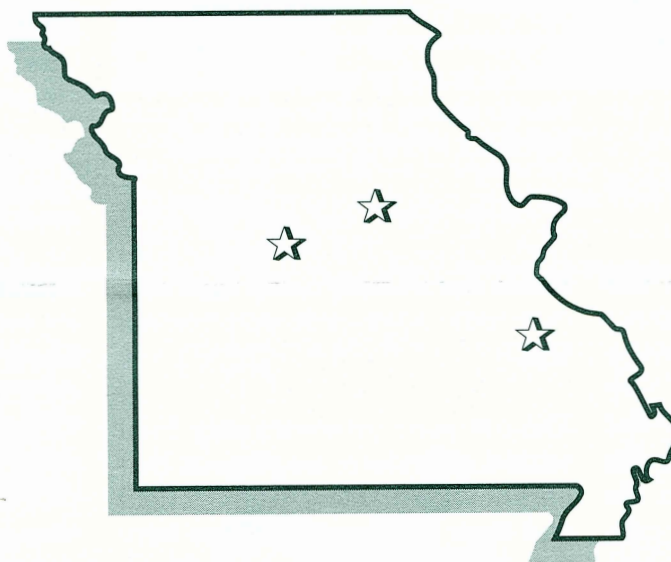
Sedalia is developing guidelines for an agriculture internship that will serve as a model in developing more internships in a variety of career pathways. And in an effort to determine the training needs of local businesses and employers, a survey instrument has been developed to gather information from a random sampling of these businesses.

Columbia Public Schools

Columbia has an established Partners in Education program which ties businesses to every school in the district. The Columbia School-to-Work project has expanded upon those relationships and added some of their own. They, like Sedalia, have adopted the Career Pathways, provided teacher inservice on the pathways and begun to align departments with them.

Columbia has been working to inform and facilitate discussion on the concept of School-to-Work by speaking with community and school organizations at their meetings and workshops. They have also been involved in the planning of several career fairs for elementary students and coordinated job shadowing experiences for a number of teachers.

In addition, efforts have been made to provide support, guidance and resources to partnership members. In July, Columbia School-to-Work held a retreat with some of its members to begin de-



veloping major categories and critical components of the system.

The group divided young people into four age categories: 3-11, 12-15, 16-18 and 19+. Under each of these categories they looked at specific areas of emphasis. Those areas are: family/community links, career choices, productive citizenship and rigorous academics. An idea for ages 3-11, under family/community, was an annual "take your child to work day" including mini-mentor training. Under productive citizenship was the option of school-based businesses. Students 16-18 would have a focus on job skills, interview skills, applications and employment laws under

career choices and a "senior seminar" under rigorous academics that would require 1/2 credit of independent study/research leading to an exhibition of learning for an appropriate audience.

Farmington Public Schools

Contracted Education is providing work experience opportunities for 60 seniors this fall at Farmington High School. The school expects an additional 40 students to participate in the spring semester. Through the program the students are matched with businesses in their area of career interest. Before they begin the program students are interviewed by their prospective employers in one-on-one situations as well as intensive formal group interviews. The growth of Contracted Education in Farmington is due in large part to ten-block scheduling, a strong emphasis on career pathways and extensive school and community support.

In addition to this program for seniors, Farmington is also preparing middle school students for careers. A Career Multimedia Resource Center has been developed in connection with a class called ACTION. The students will participate in authentic career projects, worksite tours, and career research. And their teachers will also have the opportunity to shadow current practitioners in teacher-selected occupations.

Staff members will use information from the job shadowing experience and data collected from research in the Career Multimedia Resource Center to develop lesson plans to be inserted in the everyday curriculum and presented within the context of the subject matter.



WHAT'S IN IT FOR BUSINESS??

The school-to-work initiative calls for strong partnership between businesses and schools. But what do those partnerships entail for the business community? And once employers become actively involved, what kinds of benefits can be expected?

We talked with two Missouri businesses about their involvement with school-to-work and how they feel they are benefitting from their efforts.

Sue Ball, Human Resources Manager for State Farm Insurance Company's Regional Office in Columbia Missouri has been the lead agent in school-to-work activities for State Farm in Missouri.



State Farm has had teachers come into the company to shadow several of the employees in each of the six career paths adopted by Columbia Public Schools. They are also in the process of guiding high school students in the production of a video about all aspects of the insurance industry as well as some basic workplace skills and knowledge needed to obtain a career in the field.

Through the video State Farm hopes to expose large numbers of students to the insurance industry and the types of careers involved in the industry. As a result they will create an awareness and an interest among students. Thereafter, if a student expresses an interest in the field State Farm will guide them through an

education plan for a career in the insurance industry.

Ball says State Farm's teacher shadowing program will "expose teachers to things that students will be responsible for when they become adults." And if the teachers can instruct students on those competencies, that's less training State Farm has to do when they hire a new professional. Ball says most new professionals in the insurance industry spend the majority of their first year in training. And they don't just train in insurance specific areas. They do a lot of training in communication, teambuilding, public speaking and business writing competencies.

If employees come into the company with more of this type of education and training under their belt, that reduces State Farm's bottom line.

The company promotes only from within, therefore, employees that are knowledgeable about their field and their career options are very beneficial to the company. Ball said, "We probably do more individualized career planning than schools do."

State Farm is headquartered in Bloomington, Illinois. They have 70,000 employees nationally and 1,650 in Missouri. The Columbia office is one of 28 regional offices located in the U.S. and Canada.

Harmon Industries in Warrensburg has been involved in a number of school-to-work activities including tours, job shadowing, a summer institute (described on

p.2), student workshops, employee instructors, training of student facilitators and other business/education partnership projects.

John Yost, Human Resources Manager at Harmon has developed a presentation in which he cites many

of the advantages and benefits the company has experienced as a result of their partnership efforts with the education community.



Harmon
INDUSTRIES

School-to-Work activities help Harmon find qualified employees thus reducing costs associated with turnover. Employees often learn new skills and become more confident and motivated by working with young people. Many learn to teach and improve their interpersonal skills. They take more pride in their work as they are observed in their daily setting. Employees also become more willing to change, take risks and develop their own careers.

Additional company benefits include the sharing of educational facilities, possible resources and expertise from the educational community.

Harmon Industries manufactures and engineers signaling devices for mass transit systems. They employ 1,000 people across the U.S. and 850 in the state of Missouri.





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CORPORATE/EDUCATION LINKS

A new Coopers & Lybrand analysis of high growth firms finds 41% having academic partnerships. Such firms have 21% greater revenues and 59% greater productivity than do their nonpartnering counterparts. Partnering firms also have 23 % greater planned capital investments. Among the partnering group 70% use student interns, 40% actually hire from their academic partners student body, over one third use academic partners for employee training, and 44% use faculty for technical expertise.

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